

We claim:

1. Method for preparing the surface of objects made of cork material for printing, in which said objects are subjected to at least one low pressure plasma treatment step.

2. Method according to claim 1, in which the cork material is selected from natural cork and synthetic cork.

3. Method according to claim 1, in which the cork material is selected from synthetic cork.

4. Method according to claim 4, in which the synthetic cork material comprises thermoplastic elastomer and/or styrene bloc copolymer.

5. Method according to claim 1, in which the cork material is selected from natural colored cork or black cork.

6. Method according to claim 1, in which the low pressure plasma uses a gas or gas mixture selected from O_2 , N_2 , NO_x , NH_3 , Ar, He, Ne, CO, CO_2 , SO_2 , SO_3 , CF_4 and SF_6 .

7. Method according to claim 1, in which the pressure of the low pressure plasma ranges from 0.01 to 5 mbar.

8. Method according to claim 1, in which the low pressure plasma is ignited by means of a power supply operating in the KHz, MHz or GHz range.

9. Method according to claim 1, in which the plasma treatment step(s) is (are) carried out at least several hours before printing the objects made of cork material.

10. Method according to claim 1, in which the plasma treatment step(s) is (are) carried out several days before printing the objects made of synthetic cork material.

11. Method according to claim 1, in which the objects are tumble treated as bulk goods in batches of at least 100 pieces / batch.

12. Method according to claim 1, in which the plasma treatment step(s) is (are) applied so as to reach a surface dyne level of at least 50 dynes.

13. Method according to claim 1, in which the objects made of synthetic cork material are provided in an area in which, successively, the pressure is reduced to less than 0,1 mbar, a gas or gas mixture selected from O_2 , N_2 , NO_x , NH_3 , Ar, He, Ne, CO, CO_2 , SO_2 , SO_3 , CF_4 and SF_6 is introduced at a pressure ranging up to 5 mbar, and the gas or gas mixture is ignited to form a plasma using a power supply working in the KHz, MHz or GHz range, whereas the objects made of cork material are kept tumbling in the plasma atmosphere and treated for several minutes so as to reach a surface dyne level of at least 50 dynes.

14. Method according to claim 13, in which the synthetic cork material comprises thermoplastic elastomer and/or styrene bloc copolymer.